



## CTE Standards Reform (Phase II): Myths vs. Facts

### Addressing your Questions

If you have a question that is not addressed below, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document or send it directly to [CTE.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:CTE.Questions@tn.gov). For questions on specific courses or standards implementation in the classroom, please contact the applicable career cluster consultant.

### Facts about the Revised CTE Courses

**Myth:** *CTE teachers in Tennessee were not involved in the standards development process.*

**Fact:** We value the input and experience of the CTE teachers across our state and teachers were a necessary part of our revision process, at multiple points:

- All CTE teachers were given the opportunity to participate in a month-long, online survey to gather input on our existing standards. The responses to this survey were used to draft new standards and update existing courses and programs of study. More than 540 surveys were received from CTE teachers, representing a response rate of 16%, which is a statistically representative sampling size.
- During the standards process, experienced, effective Tennessee CTE teachers were given time to review draft course standards. All three grand divisions – urban and rural regions – were represented. The average teacher reviewer had 13.5 years of experience.
- At the conclusion of the review process, sample standards and courses were discussed at meetings of teacher representative bodies, such as the Tennessee Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (TATFACS) executive council, Tennessee Association of Agriculture Educators (TAAE), regional visits, and meetings with postsecondary teacher preparation programs.
- All current teachers and external industry stakeholders have had the opportunity to impact the course standards before they are presented to the Tennessee State Board of Education for final reading by visiting the [CTE website](#) and clicking on “Career Clusters” to see the proposed standards for a specific content area and sending specific feedback to [CTE.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:CTE.Questions@tn.gov). Open public comment for the first set of courses was October 25, 2013 – November 27, 2013. Open public comment for the second set of courses is scheduled for January 31, 2014 – February 28, 2014.

**Myth:** *Family and Consumer Science is being retired and programs are closing.*

**Fact:** As part of Phase I, those courses that were formerly organized in the broad program area of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) were redistributed within five of the 16 nationally recognized Career Clusters. (All LEAs currently select programs of study/courses from the 16 Career Clusters.) The new and revised FACS course standards are aligned to their respective programs of study within the following five clusters:

- [Architecture & Construction](#)
- [Arts, A/V Technology & Communications](#)
- [Education & Training](#)
- [Hospitality & Tourism](#)
- [Human Services](#)

At its October 2013 meeting, the State Board of Education approved on first reading 16 FACS-related courses. At its January 2014 meeting, the Board will take up an additional seven courses for first reading. Teachers who are endorsed in 050, 051, 058, 450, and 451 may teach these revised and new courses. Programs of study are



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not closing. Contrary, teachers and students will have more opportunity to grow and change as the needs of our state change.

***Myth: Popular courses in Business are being retired and not replaced.***

**Fact:** The department has combined many repetitive, outdated, and duplicative courses to produce higher quality courses that reflect the needs of business and industry. Web development courses can be found in the Information Technology cluster and can still be taught by teachers endorsed in Business. A new course *Business Communications* and revisions to existing courses, such as *Computer Applications* will replace retired courses. You can find these courses in the following clusters:

- [Business Management & Administration](#)
- [Information Technology](#)

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**Fact:** The department has created new course description documents to better describe each course, as well as what students will

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**Fact:** The department has created new course description documents to better describe each course, as well as what students will know and be able to do upon course completion. The clearer course descriptions will allow teachers to set expectations for what courses should look like in the classroom and for the development of registration and recruitment materials.

- If you have feedback or recommendations on proposed course names, please submit them to [CTE.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:CTE.Questions@tn.gov) during the published open public comment period for consideration before final reading of the courses by the State Board of Education.

***Myth: The most popular courses are being retired and there is a reduction of available courses – this will reduce or close our programs.***

**Fact:** Developing content knowledge and skills for students to be ready for both postsecondary and career opportunities were the drivers for our course revision process. Standards that provide a progression of knowledge or pathway, and introduce new topics such as food science, GIS, counseling and mental health, will provide more opportunities for students to be prepared to enter the workforce after high school graduation or to transition seamlessly into postsecondary.

- If you would like support or technical assistance for growing and marketing your programs, please reach out to your respective career cluster consultant or CTE specialist for ideas.

### About the Tennessee Department of Education

The Tennessee Department of Education strives to expand students' access to effective teachers and leaders, families' access to good schools, educators' access to resources and best practices and public access to information and data. We aim to be the fastest-improving state in the nation in terms of academic achievement by 2015.



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***Myth:*** *The majority of CTE students do not attend postsecondary after high school. The new standards will be above their heads and do not teach traditional life skills that help prepare them to function in society and go directly into the workforce.*

***Fact:*** Data gathered from business and industry illustrate the skills and knowledge required for success in the workforce are identical to those required for success in postsecondary. Industry trends show the vast majority of current and future occupations will require some form of postsecondary credentialing or degree. It is our responsibility to prepare all Tennessee students with the skills they need to be successful. The revised course standards ensure that students develop skills to be productive members of society by becoming more informed and skilled individuals.

- The new standards provide rigorous expectations for what students should know and be able to do in order to be successful after high school. Standards are structured to develop conceptual understanding of both technical skills and literacy in a logical progression. All students can meet postsecondary and career readiness expectations with the correct supports.

***Myth:*** *Transitioning to the new courses and programs of study will be difficult and is happening too quickly.*

***Fact:*** Exhaustive research on employment trends and career opportunities for students was the major contributing factor in determining course changes. In order for students to maximize their preparation for future opportunities, aligned, robust courses should be offered and supported without delay.

- Recognizing that local trends or needs may be different than those at the state level, based on community resources and personnel, a school system that has high demand for a specific retired course or needs additional time to transition successfully, can submit a special course request to the Tennessee Department of Education to continue offering a particular course.
- Students who started a program of study that may be impacted by Phase II changes may be grandfathered in to complete their chosen sequence with no adverse impacts. Our goal is to ensure a natural progression of course experiences and will gladly assist any LEA to identify pathways or approaches to take for any student. Students do not have to repeat any revised courses; instead, they should continue a chosen program of study with the appropriate level course.

***Myth:*** *The new standards dictate how a teacher is to teach a specific standard.*

***Fact:*** The standards are written to provide teachers with better direction as to the content and expectations of what the student should know and be able to do. We expect teachers to customize for their students.

- Many revised standards do not include specific competencies, rather, are an inclusive expectation for student work that will span multiple days of instruction. The intent of these comprehensive standards is to instill a deeper conceptual understanding of both the technical and academic content. Concepts will be presented together using real world applications, rather than a check-list of independent tasks.
- The standards set a clear bar for student work by offering examples of what a student should be able to do. It is up to a teacher to reach that expectation in the way that best fits his/her students' needs. Many of the examples will allow for regional interpretations. We encourage teachers to use the examples provided in the standards as models to design the best activities for various populations.

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